WHIRRAKEE

August 2006 Vol. 27 No. 7

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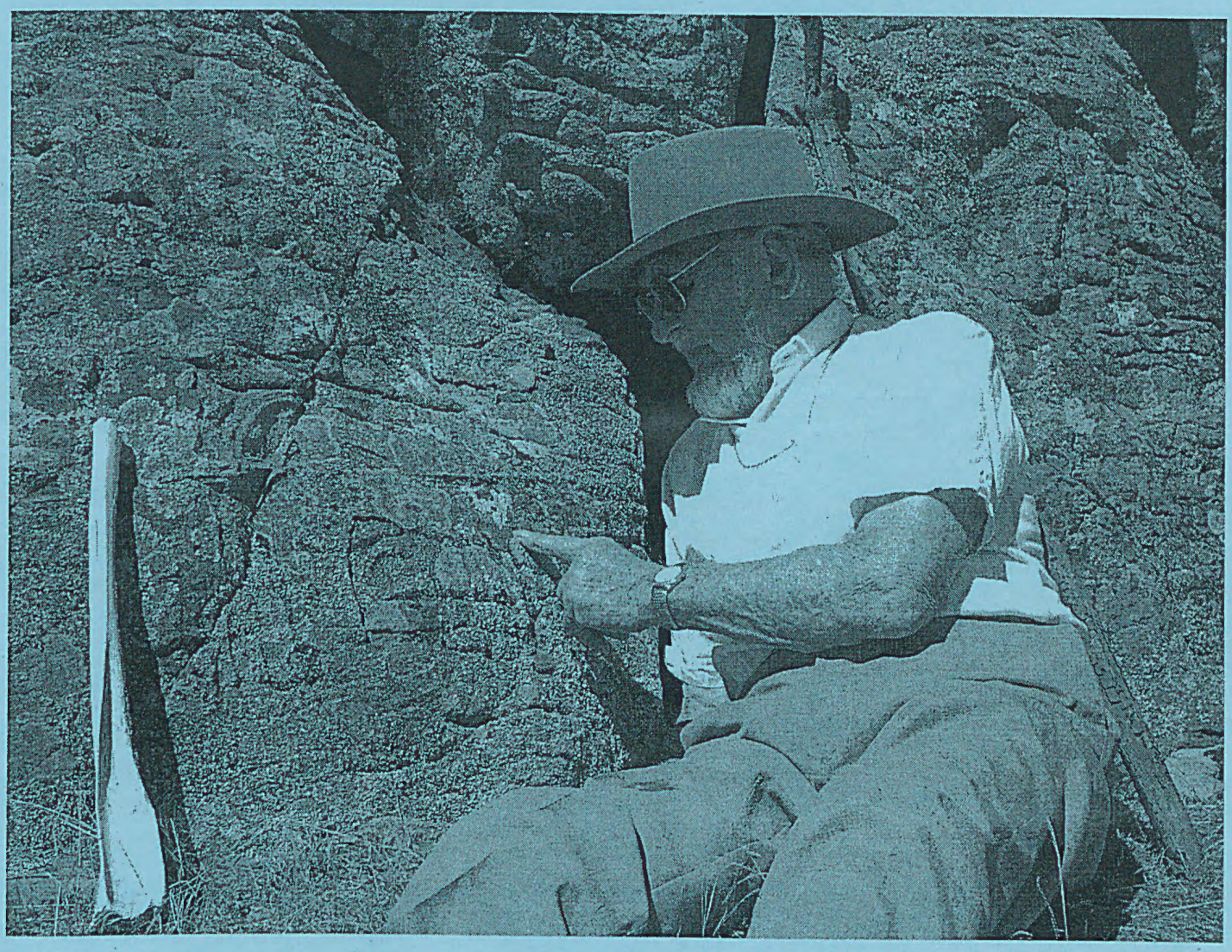

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3552
ISSN 0812-423X

Office Bearers for 2005 - 2006

President	Matthew Comer	46 Railway Place, Goornong	5432 2380
Senior Vice President	Stuart Fraser	12 Bambara Close, Bendigo	
Junior Vice President	Anne Bridley		5449 3479.
Secretary	Anne Bridley		5449 3479.
Minute Secretary	Jan Orr	2 Cockerel Court, Bendigo	5443 5668
	(with Peter Ellis as assistant)		
Treasurer	Stuart Fraser		
Membership Officer	Kate Lottkowitz	80 Piccaninny Rd, RSD Strathfieldsaye	5439 3157
Excursion organiser	Richard Goonan		0423418815
Syllabus organiser	Rod Orr	2 Cockerel Court, Bendigo	5443 5668
	(an assistant's position for the syllabus organiser is still vacant)		
Librarian	Diana Collier	31 Milroy Street, Bendigo	5443 0137
Garden Convenor/Secretary	Matthew Comer	46 Railway Place, Goornong	5432 2380
Hall Management	Maurie Lewis (assisted by Darren White)		0407 427179
Whirrakee contact	Sabine Wilkens	82 Somerville Street, Bendigo	5443 2797
		e-mail: s.wilkens@latrobe.edu.au	

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The invited speaker at general meetings starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper.
If a workshop is held prior to the meeting, it will be advertised and it usually starts at 7.00pm.
The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Ben Goonan, Richard Goonan, Bill Holsworth, Rob Moors, Rod Orr, Bob Ruddick, Darren White.

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. In addition to local excursions, campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one active group that meets regularly (the Fauna Study Group) and other groups that meet at irregular intervals.

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.
Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observers Group: This group has field excursions and the occasional lecture evening. Please consult the *Whirrakee* for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5449 3479.
To propose meetings or excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front cover photo?...see page 2.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 27, No. 7, August 2006

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note: You will notice by the insert (nomination form) that, once again, we are coming up to the Annual General Meeting. This is held in September and all committee positions are open for nomination. Please look at the inside front cover for the kind of positions that are available and seriously consider nominating yourself or somebody for one or several of these. The club runs on enthusiasm and several members have been doing their job for many years now and need a break to refresh.

Front Page Photograph – Photographer: Tim Coates
John Charles (Jack) Ipsen, foundation member of the BFNC is coming up to his 98th birthday. He recently went for an excursion to view some rock engravings at his property 'Lyal Glen', Redesdale. His daughter Leanne and grandson Tim accompanied him (see report on page 5).

Short Notices

August Excursion
The August excursion will be to Kooyoora and Inglewood for short walks in box-ironbark forests and the granite hills.
We will look at birds, plants and indigenous cultural sites and, of course, all manner of other interesting things.

Cost for the bus is $15.00.
Departure from Clubrooms: 9.00am
Approximate return: 4.00pm

Please ring Richard (0423418815) if you intend to come.

Supplement to Native Trees and Shrubs of South-Eastern Australia by Leon Costermans.

This is available on CD-ROM and will bring you up to date with the hundreds of name changes and newly described species since the book was published in 1981.
It is available for $25 from the VNPA ($21.50 VNPA members).
For order form, contact Anne Bridley (544 94379) or the VNPA (93475188)

Mid Murray Field Naturalists September Campout
Saturday 23rd September to Saturday 1st October at Big Billy Bore campground, Big Desert. Leader David Thompson ph 50302254.

South East Australian Naturalists Association Spring Camp 13th-15th October.
Hosted by Maryborough Field Naturalists Club. Registration by 30 August.
Further information, Eileen Courtney ph 54612249 Brian Johns 54612755.

FNCV 2006 Biodiversity Symposium: Invasive Species
Sunday 10 September 2006 at FNCV clubroom, Blackburn
Special guest speaker: Andrew Hingston (University of Tasmania) on "The potential impact of the bumblebee on the Australian mainland"
Registration form: Anne Bridley or FNCV, Locked Bag 3, Blackburn 3130

Report on garden working bee, 8th July 2006

By Matthew Comer

Our planting and maintenance day to mark the tenth year since the establishment of the garden was a successful day. Ten club members attended and worked quite effectively. Over 100 plants were put in plus weeds and debris removed. Whilst weeding, Bob Ruddick uncovered several amazing basket fungi, which expanded before our eyes once they were disturbed. The new interpretive signs were in place in the garden and were well received. We found the ground to be very dry for planting which meant the plants had to be well watered in. Thankfully we received the great rain a week later, which should give the plants a good start.

Some notable plants among those planted include a number of pea species such as *Dillwynia, Pultenaea, Daviesia* and *Eutaxia,* plus several of the daisies, such as everlastings.

We also planted some new shrubs to replace lost ones, such as Acacias. Some others to look for over time include a Cherry Ballart(*Exocarpus cuppressiformis*) grown from cutting. This is a semi-parasitic plant, which will hopefully be able to latch onto the roots of a host plant and become established. Plus *Clematis microphylla*, small leaved clematis, a local

climber, *Melicytus dentatus*, the tree violet, and *Myoporum montanum*, Waterbush were some species added to the garden for the first time.

Over all good afternoon was enjoyed by everyone. Thanks very much to all those who attended

You can probably guess what I'm going to write next. Yes, there are still some weeds to deal with and a few plants left over in tubes to be planted so if you are free on Saturday the 5th August and Saturday the 2nd of September (the first Saturdays of the month) please come along. I think we will try a 1pm start time again, as a couple of people said they were happy with this.

An unpublished letter to the 'Advertiser'

by Clive Fisher

Dear Editor
I read with disgust the report on pages 1 and 6 of 'The Advertiser' of Saturday 4 March regarding the removal of up to 80 ironbarks on a residential block at Kennington.

This environmental destruction is going to happen while there are people, not least developers, who seem to regard native vegetation as 'gum trees and scrub' to be removed.

As an example, the St James Wood Drive development seems to be planned by people who, if they don't actually hate the Australian bush, at least believe it is absolutely worthless, and not to be considered in any way, shape or form.

For a start, the very name, St James Wood, seems to be very European. A more appropriate name might be St James Bushland drive.

The area is home to mugga ironbarks (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*) (*E. tripcarpa*?), gold dust wattle (*Acacia acinacea*), matted bush pea (*Pultanaea pedunculata*), black anter flax lilies etc, all box-iropnbark vegetation mixed with weed species.

Originally there was a group of Cootamundra wattles (*Acacia baileyana*) which were the first to be felled, in August 2001. Next to this was a eucalypt, which was flattened, on my collecting the fruit for identification purposes, I found it to have been a southern mahogany (*Eucalyptus botryoides*), the hard wood of which was used for railway sleepers and general construction. Perhaps the developers thought it was just a 'scruffy gum tree'.

I noticed that some exotic trees from the northern hemisphere were allowed to stand, and are still there today.

Later plants were planted in the nature strips, and on examination proved to be Manchurian Pear.

Much of the bush-pea has been progressively scraped out, leaving a tiny remnant.

In 1998, I learned at university that only 17% of Victoria's box-ironbark forest had been left unfelled, but by the way much more of it is being removed in the Bendigo housing boom, the percentage must begetting smaller by the week.

I now make a plea for the people in charge of our city to consider preserving more of what we have rather than bringing in exotics like Manchurian pear and date palms.

John Charles (Jack) Ipsen's rock expedition

By Leanne Ipsen

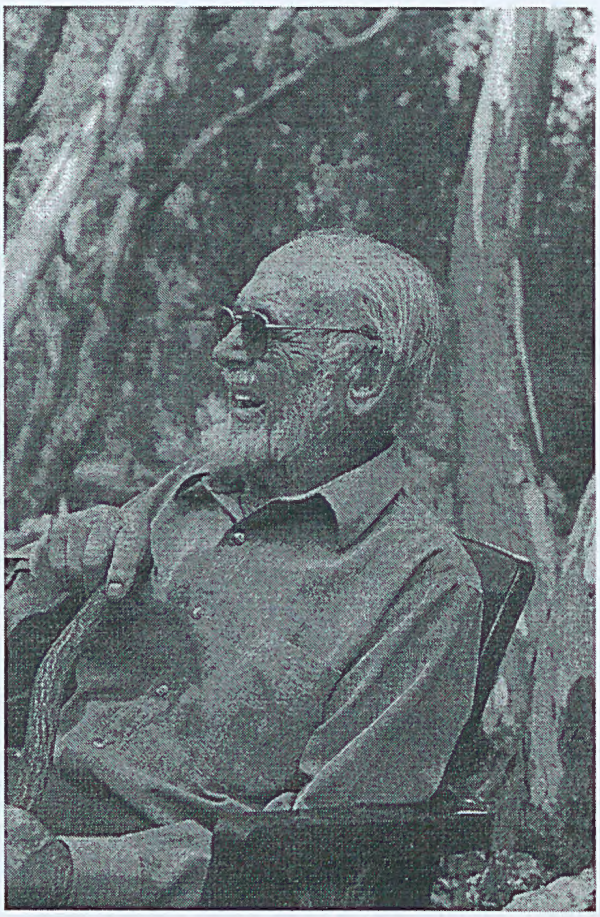
Editor's note: Leanne is John's daughter. She sent this letter and accompanying CD to Matthew Comer. The latter was shown (to our delight) at the last general meeting.

John Charles Ipsen, a founding member of the Bendigo Field Naturalists, will be 98 in September 2006. He is still strong, determined, optimistic and independent.
When Dad read an article by Darren Perry in 'News and Views' Summer 2005, put out by the North Central Catchment Management Authority, he was immediately enthused to write and tell him of a rock site which had circular (round) carving to indicate the close proximity of water. Darren, the indigenous facilitator for the North Central CMA, Huntly, then visited 'Lyal Glen' and took some photos but Dad decided he wanted to see the site "once more" for himself.
It was a particularly hot day, yet despite our reasoned pleas, his determination won, and off I traipsed with Dad, and my 15 year old son to photograph him!
John, my partner, merely dropped us off...and returned later (after watering trees).

The short CD-Rom may make a quick and helpful bridge between other agenda items some time in the future, just to assure all naturalists that old naturalists never die, they just keep on naturally doing what comes naturally to them and, naturally, we obey!!

Good luck for the continued quest for knowledge and protection of all good native Australian species.

Below are some photographs and comments from the CD-Rom.
All photographs are by Tim Coates



Many of us have been fascinated, enthralled, inspired, humbled and motivated by the natural curiosity and unswerving energy of a Naturalist who knows no boundaries, geographically, socially and even ignores the often accepted, human-imposed constraints of time tables and schedules for meals.

Instead, they are driven by "the right time for a good photograph" with "the sun at the correct angle".....and despite any insignificant "realities dictated by others" such as:

- Being nearly 98 years young
- Being warned protective hip-pads are in the mail
- Others are already watering precious indigenous plants and can't assist *(John Coates, but he joined the party after the job was done)*
- The property is behind a locked gate *(Jack rolled under the barbed wire fence on the way to the site!)*

•The hot sun is exhausting

•The walker trolley may not track over the dusty paddocks

Dad (Jack Ipsen) invited Darren Perry to view the site, then discuss and borrow diaries and pass on various Aboriginal artefacts previously in my father's possession including a beautiful grinding stone complete with thumb hold and central grinding deposit hole.
Next, Jack wanted "One last personal visit".

Benevolent dictator or truly inspired and focussed gentleman that my gentle but determined father is…

So, despite any suggested hurdles…
Walk, we did (Leanne and Jack)

…and the walker trolley did go over some of the paddocks….Tim and John Coates with Jack in the middle

This is what they have come to see. A series of concentric rings believed to have been carved by aboriginals to indicate the presence of water.

Life at the rock face…Leanne and Jack

Returning, Jack decided not to roll under the barbed wire fence! Help had arrived.

So….

•the Aboriginal water hole indicator was re-visited, filmed, photographed by his 15 year old grandson Tim Coates, another budding digital photographer in the new age, and commentated successfully by our knowledgeable naturalist

•Darren Perry was invited to visit…

•Diaries of records were shared

•Aboriginal implements were passed on

•Another of my father's dreams was achieved

The continuing connection of our land to its historical origins has been honoured

Next in the Dreaming

•Timothy Patrick Ipsen Coates: digital photographer

•Amy Elizabeth Ipsen Coates: budding designer

•John Richard Coates: Indiginous plant and tree planter

•Leanne Adele Ipsen: creative encourager and artist

•John Charles Ipsen: naturalist, ornithologist, apiarist, philosopher

•Beekeeper previously on property

•Louey Pak Chinese market gardener

Remember this?
(Front cover of Whirrakee in April 2006…)
Sir David Attenborough on location when filming Giant Gippsland Earthworms for 'Life in the Undergrowth'

John Charles Ipsen
…two wonderful field naturalists

July General Meeting
Speaker: Elvyne Hogan: Trust for Nature Activities in the Region

By Sabine Wilkens

Elvyne is the regional manager for Trust for Nature for North Central Victoria, and in that role, is able to pursue her passion for conserving and enhancing the natural environment. This passion has been within Elvyne for a very long time since Kerrie Norris, who introduced the speaker mentioned that they met at the Franklin River campaign – now how long ago is that!

Trust for Nature is Australia's oldest independent land trust. It was founded by Rupert Hamer in 1972 and since then over 70000ha of land has been protected. In Victoria, a relatively small state, the amount of protection for land is, nevertheless, the second largest for all states.
By March 2006, the 100th covenant for the North Central region (the region Elvyne is managing) was placed on a property and Elvyne showed us how this was duly celebrated at the time.

All up, within the range of the organisation, 735 covenants are protecting 31177 ha of private land and many more are in the process of being approved.
Elvyne's own property, 'Casuarina Hill', was covenanted about nine years ago with the Trust assisting with fencing against rabbits.
Since then, the native plants have recovered very well with their numbers increasing from about 20 to about 100 including sun orchids, Vanish Wattle, Fringe Myrtle and Long-leaf Box.

The Barfold gorge is an interesting place that demonstrates and will test the power of covenanted properties. At present, it has four covenants but one of the properties is about to be sold. It has the potential to be quarried, which is why the covenants was put on it in the first place.

In general, however, the Trust has been focussing on grassland properties, as grasslands are an extremely endangered habitat for wildlife like the Bush Curlew and the Mallee Fowl.

Near Donald, a property of plains woodland was covenanted where there was a threat of sandmining. This was the first of potentially affected properties, but Elvyne was hoping more landholders will follow this example. While mining activities have precedence over conservation, and the covenant would not stand up in protecting a place, mining companies are usually sensitive to covenants of this sort and respect them.

Another focus of Trust for Nature properties are riparian environments. 'Fernihurst' along the Loddon River was covenanted. It has several important aboriginal sites registered along Serpentine Creek.

Many riverside properties are badly degraded with salinity being a major issue in the region as well as damage by stock accessing the river. Another property that might show some improvement now it is covenanted and fenced is on the Richardson River near Donald.
There are few riparian sites left with intact native vegetation and these are in need of special protection. One of these is near Axedale where there have been reports of platypuses.

Areas that fall under the management of the City of Greater Bendigo may also be assisted in their conservation effort by the City of Greater Bendigo Bushcare Incentive Scheme. The BFNC's effort in purchasing a TFN property at Junortoun on Bennetts Road was boosted by this fund. The land was handed over to the City of Greater Bendigo for management in 1997.

Another property on the O'Keefe Trail has recently been purchased. It has many links with the aboriginal population of the area and has had a traditional naming ceremony with the Bunjil Dance Group.
'Knul-doorong' means woodland, and the Jarra people will maintain their links with this reserve in the future.

Once a landholder has a property covenanted, assistance in managing the land is provided. In our region, Tim Read is the Stewardship officer and he provides such assistance. Once an area is protected, photopoints are usually set up to monitor the recovery process. Occasionally volunteer groups are organised into conservation efforts on the land. Recently Conservation Volunteers Australia has helped in some projects, like planting or weed removal. Although these volunteers are most often from overseas countries, it is a wonderful learning experience for them and they often have a great deal of enthusiasm.

Farmers are often a bit harder to convince of the value of covenanting a property as a loss of income is often involved initially. The government is now allowing such losses to be written off in tax and this may help the conservation effort significantly.

Bendigo Mining, who in the process of expanding their operations destroyed 40ha of bushland at Diamond Hill, has purchased, as an offset, a total of 200ha of bushland at various sites, three at Tottington, one at St Arnaud and one at Stawell.

To maintain their power to purchase properties with good conservation value, TFN must have money available. The organization has set up a revolving fund. With that, they buy a property, put covenants on and then re-sell it to conservation-minded people. The money then goes back to the revolving fund. This way good land goes into ownership of people who care for it.

TFN operates in partnership with the North Central Catchment Management Authority as well as with the Department of Sustainability and Environment in a regional conservation management network. This way all the organisations work together in managing important flora and fauna habitat on public and private land as well as looking after other land values like cultural and geologically important sites.

This was a very promising and inspiring talk and I left feeling very positive about the future of rare and endangered habitat in this state.

If anyone would like further information on TFN's activities, the contact details are:

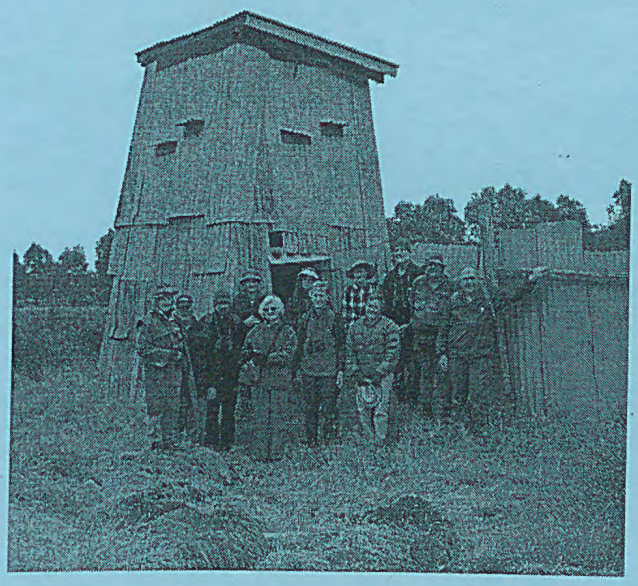
Elyne Hogan
PO Box 65 Bendigo 3552

Phone 54354062
e-mail: elvyneh@tfn.org.au

April Excursion to the Whipstick Forest and the Bendigo Sewage Farm

Wouldn't you like to explore your local environment and join with these happy field naturalists on a day of discovery?

The next excursion is to the Kooyoora Forest, another fascinating environment (See notice on page 3)



Diary
The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meetings

Wednesday, August 9 7.30pm
Martin Scuffin is the speaker. His topic is 'The Hawk and the Hunter'.

Wednesday, September 13 7.30pm
Annual General Meeting.
Sneak preview of September topic: This talk will (hopefully) be about recovery of rare plants. Two of these are orchids from the Bendigo district.

Excursions
The August Excursion will be to Kooyoora/Inglewood for short walks in box-ironbark forest and granite hills to look at birds, plants and indigenous cultural sites.

Please ring Richard Goonan (0423418815) if you intend to come.
Cost for the bus: $15.00
Departure: 9am, approximate return 4pm.

And…bring you lunch and warm clothes.

The February edition of *Whirrakee* (page 3) has the entire 2006 excursion program, but please note that the August and July excursions have been swapped around.

Fauna Group
This group meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

Wednesday, August 23 7.30pm
Mystery Night. Participants are free to bring along any item or topic for discussion.

Fauna Excursions
Every Friday morning starting at around 9 to 9:30, the Fauna Group inspects nest boxes in the Spring Gully area. The excursions are led by Maurie Lewis, 16 Vains St. Golden Square. Phone 0407 427 179 or 5442 1813. Phone Maurie to confirm exact departure times and location. If you don't phone but go directly to Maurie's house and find nobody at the house between 9 and 9:30 then the excursion is not on.

The Club Garden working bee will be held at the usual Saturday in August and September. Please see article on page 3 and note the change of starting time.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need.
Phone: 0419 356433.

Spring in the Bendigo Bush
This program has been organised quite late this year and for this reason our activities are reduced. A local walk will b led by BFNC members on September 2/3, in conjunction with an inspection of our club garden.
Any members who might want to contribute to this activity, please contact Jane Cleary.

New Edition of Box Ironbark CD
Just to let you know that the new edition of 'Plants and Animals of the Box-Ironbark Area of Central Victoria' is available at the usual price of $ 50.

…and **Wildlife of the Box Ironbark Country by Chris Tzaros** is also still available at $ 30.-
Please contact Bill Holsworth if you are interested in purchasing one of these.